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AMEMBASSY TOKYO

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USLO PEKING

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 059455

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, KS, KN, US

SUBJ: NORTH KOREAN PEACE AGREEMENT PROPOSAL

REF: (A) SEOUL 1094; (B) SEOUL 1905

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF PRESS GUIDANCE USED DEPT NOON
BRIEFING MARCH 25.

2. QUOTE: WE HAVE SEEN ONLY THE PRESS ACCOUNTS OF THE
NORTH KOREAN PROPOSALS FOR A PEACE TREATY. AT THIS TIME
I WOULD WISH TO MERELY MAKE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS:

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WITH RESPECT TO THE EMPHASIS ON U.S. TROOPS IN THE REPORTED

NORTH KOREAN PROPOSALS, IT SHOULD BE CLEAR BY NOW THAT U.S. FORCES ARE IN KOREA TO PRESERVE THE PEACE AND MAINTAIN STABILITY ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA. THEY ARE THERE AT THE INVITATION OF THE ROK GOVERNMENT AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH A BILATERAL MUTUAL DEFENSE TREATY.

SECONDLY, THE U.S. AND ROKG HAVE ALWAYS BEEN INTERESTED IN SERIOUS PROPOSALS TO LESSEN TENSIONS ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA. IN THIS CONNECTION, I WOULD CALL ATTENTION TO THE NONAGGRESSION PROPOSAL WHICH PRESIDENT PARK RECENTLY PUT FORWARD AND WHICH THE U.S. SUPPORTS, AS WELL AS THE CONSENSUS RESOLUTION ADOPTED AT LAST FALL'S UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY WHICH URGED BOTH SIDES TO CONTINUE THEIR DIALOGUE.

I WOULD EMPHASIZE THAT THE KOREAN PROBLEM MUST BE RESOLVED BY BOTH SIDES THEMSELVES.

3. FOLLOWING IS TRANSCRIPT OF PORTION PERTAINING TO THIS QUESTION IN DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING MARCH 25:

QUESTION: JOHN, DO YOU HAVE ANY REACTION TO THE NORTH KOREAN REQUEST FOR PEACE RATHER THAN AN ARMED TRUCE?

ANSWER: NOT A LOT. WE'VE SEEN ONLY THE PRESS ACCOUNTS OF THE NORTH KOREAN PROPOSALS -- WHICH SEEM TO BE A RE-FORMULATION OR NEW PRESENTATION OF A SERIES OF PROPOSALS THEY MADE TO US ABOUT A YEAR AGO. BUT THE ONLY COMMENT I WOULD MAKE ON IT, ON THE GENERAL SITUATION, INASMUCH AS WE HAVEN'T HAD A CHANCE TO REVIEW WHAT IS IN THE PACKAGE, IS THAT IT SHOULD BE CLEAR BY NOW THAT U.S. FORCES ARE IN KOREA TO PRESERVE THE PEACE AND TO MAINTAIN STABILITY ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA.

I DON'T HAVE TO REMIND YOU THAT THEY ARE THERE AT THE INVITATION OF THE ROK GOVERNMENT AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE BILATERAL MUTUAL DEFENSE TREATY BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND KOREA.

Q: SAY THAT LAST PART AGAIN, JOHN?

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A: THEY ARE THERE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE BILATERAL MUTUAL DEFENSE TREATY BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES.

SECONDLY, BOTH WE AND THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA GOVERNMENT HAVE ALWAYS BEEN INTERESTED IN SERIOUS PROPOSALS THAT WOULD LESSEN TENSIONS ON THE PENINSULA. AND, IN THIS CONNECTION, I WOULD CALL TO YOUR ATTENTION THE NONAGGRESSION PROPOSALS WHICH PRESIDENT PARK RECENTLY PUT FORWARD AND WHICH WE

SUPPORT. I WOULD CALL ATTENTION AS WELL TO THE CONSENSUS RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY LAST FALL, WHICH URGED BOTH SIDES TO CONTINUE THEIR DIALOGUE.

WE CONTINUE TO FEEL THAT THE KOREAN PROBLEM MUST BE RESOLVED BY THE TWO SIDES THEMSELVES.

THAT'S THE STATEMENT.

(LATER IN NEWS BRIEFING)

Q: NOW, I THINK THERE ARE AS MANY CONFUSING ELEMENTS SO LONG AS I COULDN'T GET FULLY WHAT YOU IMPLIED BY SAYING THAT THE U.S. WAS CONTINUING TO FEEL THE KOREAN PROBLEM

SHOULD BE RESOLVED BETWEEN TWO SIDES.

NOW, IT IS QUITE CLEAR THE UNITED STATES IS STILL A PARTY TO THE ARMISTICE AGREEMENT MADE IN 1953, AND SECRETARY KISSINGER --

A: I'M SORRY, I MISSED THE FIRST PART OF YOUR QUESTION.

Q: WELL, YOU COMMENTED, YOU SAID THE U.S. CONTINUED TO FEEL, NOW THE UNITED STATES HAS BEEN AND STILL IS A PARTY TO THE ARMISTICE AGREEMENT IN KOREA. AND SECRETARY KISSINGER HAS REPEATEDLY SAID BEFORE THAT THE UNITED STATES IS PREPARED TO DISCUSS TOWARD STRENGTHENING THE DURABLE PEACE IN KOREA, IMPLIES TO ME THAT HE COULD ALSO BE READY TO DISCUSS WITH SOUTH KOREA ON REPLACING THE FORMER ARMISTICE AGREEMENT. HOW COULD THEY CLOSE THE GAP IN UNDERSTANDING THAT THE UNITED STATES FEELS THE KOREAN PROBLEM CAN BE RESOLVED BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH KOREA WHILE CONFIDENTIAL

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AT THE SAME TIME THE UNITED STATES IS A PARTY TO THE ARMISTICE AGREEMENT. THAT IS ONE OF THE CONFUSING ELEMENTS I COULDN'T UNDERSTAND. AND SECOND, THERE IS -- YOU SAID THE UNITED STATES AND THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA ARE ALWAYS INTERESTED IN SERIOUS PROPOSALS. ARE YOU SUGGESTING THAT THIS SPECIFIC PROPOSAL THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT IS ALSO INTERESTED AND THIS LATEST PROPOSAL? (SIC)

A: WELL, MAY I ANSWER THE SECOND QUESTION FIRST?

Q: THE LATEST PROPOSAL MADE TODAY.

A: TO ANSWER YOUR SECOND QUESTION, WE HAVEN'T SEEN THE PROPOSAL THAT YOU ARE DISCUSSING HERE. WE ARE JUST AWARE OF THE PRESS REPORTS OF THE PROPOSAL HAVING BEEN MADE.

AND WITH RESPECT TO THE FIRST PART OF YOUR QUESTION, I DON'T SEE WHY THERE SHOULD BE ANY CONFUSION THAT WE FEEL -- AND IT SEEMS TO ME A RATHER COMMON SENSE POSITION TO TAKE -- THAT THE MATTER IS BASICALLY BETWEEN THE TWO KOREAS. AND THAT DIDN'T SEEM TO ME TO BE INCONSISTENT WITH ANYTHING WE'VE SAID ABOUT THIS OVER THE YEARS.

Q: OKAY THEN, ARE YOU SUGGESTING THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT ACTUALLY VIRTUALLY REJECTS THE PROPOSAL OF NORTH KOREA TO DIRECTLY NEGOTIATE WITH THE UNITED STATES INSTEAD OF SOUTH KOREA?

A: WELL, IF YOU ARE SAYING THAT'S WHAT THEIR PROPOSAL IS, FINE. YOU PUT YOUR OWN INTERPRETATION ON IT. BUT, BEFORE WE MAKE ANY PRONUNCIAMENTOS ON THE SUBJECT, IT'S A PRUDENT THING TO READ THE KOREAN PROPOSAL.

Q: JOHN, AS A TECHNICAL AND POSSIBLY LEGAL, AND I SUPPOSE A DIPLOMATIC QUIBBLE, YOU MENTIONED THE CONSENSUS RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY. HAS THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY EVER FORMALLY DIVESTED ITSELF OF THIS MATTER WHICH IT WAS SEIZED 23 YEARS AGO?

A: I DON'T BELIEVE SO.

Q: WHAT?
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A: SUBJECT TO CORRECTION BY BETTER MINDS, I DON'T BELIEVE SO.

(LATER)

Q: JOHN, RETURNING TO THE KOREAN QUESTION, THIS PROPOSAL FROM NORTH KOREA WAS ADDRESSED TO THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES -- NOT THE NORMAL WAY FOR GOVERNMENTS TO COMMUNICATE. DO WE REGARD THAT AS A SERIOUS PROPOSAL OR IS IT A PROPAGANDA PROPOSAL?

A: WELL, I'LL TRY TO BE EVEN-HANDED IN MY PRUDENCE. AGAIN, WE HAVEN'T HAD A CHANCE TO SEE WHAT IT IS, BUT I DID ACKNOWLEDGE THAT ABOUT A YEAR AGO -- MAYBE EVEN LONGER -- IT WAS ONE OF THESE JOINT PARLIAMENT TO PARLIAMENT EFFORTS -- AND, YOU KNOW, NOTHING CAME OF THAT.

Q: WHAT HAPPENED TO IT HERE? DID IT GET TO THE CONGRESS?

A: I DON'T KNOW.

Q: WHAT WAS THE REACTION OF THE ADMINISTRATION,OF THE
STATE DEPARTMENT, TO THE PREVIOUS PROPOSAL, JOHN? CAN YOU
REMIND US OF THAT?

YES, YOU SAID THIS PROPOSAL WAS SIMILAR TO ONE MADE A YEAR
AGO. CAN YOU PLEASE REMIND US WHAT THE ADMINISTRATION'S
RESPONSE WAS ON THAT OCCASION?

A: OFF-HAND, I CAN'T, BUT I DID NOTE IT CAME TO VERY
LITTLE. RUSH

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